

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims such that the pending claims read as follows:

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4. (Twice Amended) A method for presenting electronic mail messages to an operator, including the step of:

loading a plurality of headers from a mail server, each one of said headers associated with an electronic mail message addressed to at least said operator, each of said plurality of headers loaded separately from its associated electronic mail message;

receiving a dynamic selection of a first one of said electronic mail messages from said operator after at least one of said plurality of headers have been loaded and prior to said associated electronic mail message being loaded;

presenting said first electronic mail message to said operator;

identifying a second one of said electronic mail messages for preloading;

preloading said second electronic mail message for later presentation, without interrupting presentation of said first electronic mail message; and

presenting to said operator a status of said step of preloading said second electronic mail message.

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5. (Amended) A method as in claim 4, wherein said step of presenting to said

operator includes the steps of

displaying a partial preview of said second electronic mail message; and  
altering said partial preview in response to a change in status of said step of  
preloading said second electronic mail message.

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could. 6. (Amended) A method as in claim 4, wherein said step of presenting to said  
operator said status includes the step of displaying a preview of said second electronic mail  
message in a distinct format.

7. (Amended) A method as in claim 4, wherein said step of presenting to said  
operator said status includes the step of displaying at least one graphic element.

8. (Amended) A method as in claim 4, wherein said step of presenting to said  
operator said status includes the step of displaying text.

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25. (Twice Amended) Apparatus for presenting electronic mail messages to an  
operator, said apparatus including:

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Cm.t. a mail client disposed for coupling to a mail server using a communication link;  
means at said mail client for loading a plurality of headers from a mail server,  
each one of said headers associated with an electronic mail message addressed to at least said  
operator, each of said plurality of headers loaded separately from its associated electronic mail  
message;

an input port at said mail client disposed for receiving a dynamic selection of a first one of said electronic mail messages from said operator after at least one of said plurality of headers have been loaded and prior to said associated electronic mail message being loaded;

an output port at said mail client disposed for presenting said first electronic mail message to said operator;

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Cmld. means at said mail client for identifying a second one of said electronic mail messages for preloading;

means at said mail client for preloading said second electronic mail message for later presentation, without interrupting presentation of said first electronic mail message;

an input element coupled to said input port;

an output element coupled to said output port; and

a progress indicator for preloading said second electronic mail message.

26. Apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said progress indicator includes a partial preview of said second electronic mail message.

B4 27. (Twice Amended) Apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said progress indicator includes a preview of said second electronic mail message in a distinct format.

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Cmt 28. (Amended) Apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said progress indicator includes at least one graphic element.

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29. (Amended) Apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said progress indicator

includes text.

41. (Amended) A computer program product including:

a computer usable storage medium having computer readable code embodied therein for causing a computer to present electronic mail messages to an operator, said computer readable code including:

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computer readable program code configured to cause said computer to effect a mail client disposed for coupling to a mail server using a communication link;

computer readable program code configured to cause said computer to effect a header load mechanism at said mail client configured to load a plurality of headers from a mail server, each one of said headers associated with an electronic mail message addressed to at least said operator, each of said plurality of headers loaded separately from its associated electronic mail message;

computer readable program code configured to cause said computer to effect a first input mechanism at said mail client configured to receive a dynamic selection of a first one of said electronic mail messages from said operator after at least one of said plurality of headers have been loaded and prior to said associated electronic mail messages being loaded;

computer readable program code configured to cause said computer to effect a presentation mechanism configured to present said first electronic mail message to said operator;

computer readable program code configured to cause said computer to effect a selection mechanism at said mail client configured to identify a second one of said electronic mail messages for preloading;

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computer readable program code configured to cause said computer to effect a download mechanism at said mail client configured to preload said second electronic mail message for later presentation, without interrupting presentation of said first electronic mail message; and

computer readable program code configured to cause said computer to effect a progress indicator configured to present to said operator a status of preloading said second electronic mail message.

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42. The program product of claim 41 further including:

computer readable program code configured to cause said computer to effect an interrupt mechanism configured to interrupt the download mechanism, responsive to the first input mechanism.

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43. (Amended) An apparatus for presenting electronic mail messages to an operator, the apparatus including:

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a mail client disposed for coupling to a mail server using a communication link;  
a header load mechanism at said mail client configured to load a plurality of

headers from said mail server, each one of said headers associated with an electronic mail

message addressed to at least said operator, each of said plurality of headers loaded separately from its associated electronic mail message;

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Cmcd. a first input mechanism at said mail client configured to receive a dynamic selection of a first one of said electronic mail messages from said operator after at least one of said plurality of headers have been loaded and prior to said associated electronic mail messages being loaded;

a presentation mechanism configured to present said first electronic mail message to said operator;

a selection mechanism at said mail client configured to identify a second one of said electronic mail messages for preloading;

a download mechanism at said mail client configured to preload said second electronic mail message for later presentation, without interrupting presentation of said first electronic mail message; and

a progress indicator mechanism at said mail client configured to present to said operator a status of preloading said second electronic mail message.

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44. The apparatus of claim 43 further including:

an interrupt mechanism configured to interrupt the download mechanism, responsive to the first input mechanism.